DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 507 HE 009 737

AUTHOR Smurthwaite, Ann; And Others
TITLE A Report on the Early Leavers' Scheme at Monash University, 1974-1977.
INSTITUTION Monash Univ., Clayton, Victoria (Australia).
PUB DATE Oct 77
NOTE 77p.; Research prepared by the Higher Education Advisory and Research Unit; Light print and some charts may not reproduce clearly

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Admission Criteria; *College Admission; College Students; *Disadvantaged Youth; Dropout Research; *Educationally Disadvantaged; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Potential Dropouts; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; *Student Application; Student Attitudes; Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS *High Risk Students; Monash University (Australia); *Selective Admissions

ABSTRACT

Examined is the success of Monash's Early Leavers' Scheme in terms of the performance, characteristics, and experience of successful applicants, and the manner in which the scheme has operated. The first section of the report provides background information on the establishment of the Scheme (to provide a modification to entry requirements for disadvantaged students) and describes selection methods (such as aptitude tests). Section 2 presents data regarding the number of applicants and numbers surviving at different parts of the selection procedure (the number of applicants was found to decrease each year), and outlines, in statistical form, socio-educational characteristics of the entrants (including age, sex, nationality, level and type of secondary education, postsecondary qualifications, and previous occupation). Section 3 details the performance and withdrawal rate of Early Leavers (the yearly pass rate was 80% and the withdrawal rate 15%). Results of entrant interviews are examined in section 4 (including information regarding financial support, personal life, academic problems, and vocational plans). The final section makes recommendations for methods of selection and the need for special assistance. Appended are an application form and entrant questionnaires. (BD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED165507

THE EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME AT MONASH UNIVERSITY

1974 - 1977

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ann Smurthwaite
Monash University

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 009737

Higher Education Advisory and Research Unit.

A REPORT ON THE EARLY LEAVERS' SCHEME AT MONASH UNIVERSITY 1974 - 1977

Ann Smurthwaite, Elena Eaton,
Terry Hore, Ian Thomas,
Leo West

OCTOBER 1977
NO.77/152/10/5081

Higher Education Advisory
and Research Unit
Monash University
Clayton, Vic. 3168.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
PART I		
1	Introduction	1
	1.1 Establishment of the Scheme	1
	1.2 Method of Selection	1
	1.3 Purpose of Report	2
PART II		
2	Numbers and Characteristics of Applicants	3
3	Personal, Social and Educational Background of Entrants	6
	3.1 Personal Characteristics	6
	3.2 Educational and Occupational Background of Entrants	8
4	Course	13
PART III		
5	Performance	15
6	Withdrawal Rate	16
PART IV		
7	Questionnaire Results	19
	7.1.1 Experience of the University	19
	7.1.2 Second and Later Year Experience	21
	7.2 Grounds on Which Early Leavers Applied for Entry	23
	7.3 Reasons for Seeking Entrance to the University	23
	7.4 Expectations of the University	25
	7.5 Allowances and Financial Difficulties	27
	7.6 Effects on Personal Life	29
	7.7 Sources of Tension	33

		Page
7.8	Illness	35
7.9	Difficulty with Course	37
7.10	Problems in Being an Early Leaver or Mature Age Student	39
7.11	Change in Attitude to the University	41
7.12	Employment Whilst at University	43
7.13	Time Spent in Private Study	44
7.14	Plans for Graduation	45
7.15	Need for Special Help	47
7.16	Relations With Staff	49
7.17	Other Comments	50

PART V

8	Conclusion	51
8.1	Type of Entrants	51
8.2	Performance	51
8.3	Withdrawal Rate	51
8.4	Grounds on Which Entry Sought	52
8.5	Reasons for Coming to the University	52
8.6.1	Special Problems	52
8.6.2	Personal Life	53
8.7	Method of Selection	53
9	Recommendations	54
9.1	Method of Selection	54
9.2	Special Assistance	54
References		56
Appendix A	Application form	
Appendix B	i) Questionnaire (1974 Entrants)	
	ii) Questionnaire (1975 Entrants)	

PART I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Establishment of the Scheme

The plan to establish the Early Leavers' Scheme at Monash appears to have grown out of a University Council decision of October 9th, 1972 to request the Joint Committee to investigate 'the position of underprivileged and disadvantaged students ... as a first step towards meeting the needs of pupils from underprivileged schools or homes ... and to consider future policy.'

In 1973 Professorial Board accepted in principle the Special Admissions Committee's recommendations 'that the University modify its selection procedures to assist disadvantaged students.' They classified 'disadvantaged' students in two ways - '(a) those who have gained the necessary minimum qualifications for entry into the University, and (b) those who have not.' The Committee reported that on legal advice the selection provisions would have to be drawn up in such a way that those selected must be seen to be of equal academic ability as 'normal' students whom they would be displacing.

Out of this recommendation grew the 'B' Scheme - or Early Leavers' Scheme with which this report deals. In their report to Professorial Board the Special Admissions Committee recommended -

> ...that a scheme similar to the La Trobe Special Entrance Scheme be instituted. The proposal is that up to 2 per cent of the quota in each faculty will be persons who have none of the prescribed qualifications and who have demonstrated in a test or tests or by some other method that they are equal or better in ability than any persons whom they displace from the quota. These applicants will be exempt from any formal pre-requisite requirements, provided that they can demonstrate that they have the necessary background knowledge to undertake the course to which they are being admitted. (Professorial Board Minutes No. 6/73)

There was no attempt to set out the Committee's philosophy behind the setting up of the Scheme other than as an echo of the La Trobe Special Entrance Scheme.

1.2 Method of Selection

The way in which Early Leavers are selected has altered since the first year.

To be eligible for the Scheme, applicants must not have completed the HSC or equivalent and they must have left school five years previously. In the first year (1974) applicants were required to state on what grounds they were 'disadvantaged' and to sumbit an essay on 'Why I want to come to Monash'. Applications were then graded on degree of 'disadvantage' and those judged eligible (see Table 1) invited to sit for an aptitude test (ASAT). Finally the individual faculty committees were responsible for selecting the applicants. It was up to the selection committee in each faculty how they made that decision - whether to interview and degree of emphasis placed on the 500 word essay.

In the following years the method of selection has been altered. (See Appendix A for a copy of the current application form). Applicants indicate from a check list the nature of their 'disadvantage' - e.g. native tongue not English, chronic ill-health, unpropitious family circumstances. They may also provide additional information about their background. An essay is no longer required. The final selection is made from amongst those who have scored above a cut off point on the aptitude test by the faculty committee.

1.3 The Purpose of this Report

The report has been compiled from information and statistics of the first four intakes supplied by the Administration, and from interviews with the first two Early Leaver intakes. The purpose of the report is to examine the success of the Scheme in terms of the performance, characteristics and experience of the University of successful applicants, and the manner in which the Scheme has operated.

PART II

2. NUMBERS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICANTS (1974-1977)

Table 1 sets out the number and fate of applicants in the first four years of the Scheme.

TABLE 1: Applicants by Faculty Choice+

Faculty	No. of applicants				Eligible for test				Rejected on tests				Rejected by faculty				Enrolled*			
	Year				Year				Year				Year				Year			
	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77
Arts	321	267	235	165	159	132	135	149	112	86	92	66	28	22	15	57	19	27	27	26
Ecops.	62	85	48	29	31	68	24	16	11	49	19	13	7	14			12	6	4	3
Law	45	29	53	31	23	21	36	21	10	9	29	16	7	4		1	6	8	7	4
Engineer.	3	7	7	2	1	5	3	2			2	2	1	5	1					
Medicine	10	26	11	5	7	19	4	4	1	12	4	3	5	7		1	1			
Science	12	20	9	5	3	14	4			6	3		3	8						
Total	453	434	363	237	224	259	206	192	134	162	149	100	51	60	16	59	38	37	38	33

+Information based on that supplied by Administration.

*Each year one or more entrants deferred their place. They are included in the figures for the year in which they actually commenced their course.

Since the Scheme began the number of applicants has fallen each year. The decrease is most marked in Arts, the faculty to which the greatest number of applicants seek entry. The number of applicants finally accepted for enrolment has decreased in Economics and Law while Engineering and Science have never enrolled an Early Leaver. Medicine accepted one entrant in 1974 who failed in his first year.

The number selected to sit for the aptitude test has shown less fluctuation from year to year. That is, fewer applicants are denied the opportunity to sit for the test. In 1976 a much higher proportion of candidates were rejected on the basis of their test scores than in any other year.

In 1977 fewer places were actually taken up than in the previous years.

Table 2 gives a breakdown of applicants by sex at various stages in the selection procedure.

In both 1974 and 1977 more women than men applied for entry under the Scheme. However 1977 was the first year in which women outnumbered male entrants. In each year more women than men have applied for entry to Arts. Men more frequently than women applied for places in Economics and Law.

HIGHER EDUCATION ADVISORY AND RESEARCH UNIT

MONASH UNIVERSITY

EARLY LEAVERS' SCHEME

Summary of Report

The Report covers the period of entrants between 1974 and 1977. The Report is broken into five sections.

1. In the first section there is a short background on the establishment of the Scheme and of the method of selection used. In brief, the Scheme was set up to provide a modification to the existing entry requirements for persons able to demonstrate that they were prevented from completing secondary school because of a 'disadvantaged' background. The method of selection is primarily based on establishment of 'disadvantage' and an aptitude test (ASAT).

2. The second section gives details of numbers of applicants and numbers surviving at different parts of the selection procedure. There has been a decrease in the number of applicants each year, and by far the largest proportion of entrants are accepted into the Arts faculty.

   The second part of this section outlines in statistical form some socio-educational characteristics of the entrants. These include age, sex, country of birth, level and type of secondary education, post-secondary qualifications, previous occupation, faculty, type of enrolment.

3. The third section details the performance and withdrawal rate of Early Leavers, by cohort, for the period 1974 to 1976. In each year the pass rate has been 80 per cent and frequently over 90 per cent. In each year the 1974 and 1975 intakes achieved a percentage of graded passes of over 40 per cent. The equivalent figure for the 1976 intake was 27 per cent. The withdrawal rate was approximately 15 per cent per year. The chief reasons given for withdrawal were domestic problems, and failure to adjust to University life. The withdrawal rate includes temporary withdrawal - e.g. deferment.

4. The fourth section deals in detail with the results of interviews of the 1974 and 1975 entrants, in 1976. The 1974 entrants had previously been interviewed at the beginning of 1975 and some use is also made of this earlier information. Students were questioned on their experience of the University, grounds on which entry was sought, reasons for wishing to come to the University, financial support and

difficulties, effects on personal life, difficulties with course, problems as an Early Leaver, changes in attitude to the University, time spent in private study and in employment, vocational plans for graduation, relations with staff, need for special help.

5. The final section draws some conclusions from the study and makes several recommendations. The most significant results are mentioned below.

i) Type of Entrants

There is evidence of 'disadvantage' amongst these entrants, based on the socio-educational statistics. The Scheme has been most popular with women although more men have actually been selected each year (except for 1977). Although largely Australian-born, there is a significant group of British-born migrants who have benefited from the Scheme. As a group, Early Leavers tend to have more diverse educational backgrounds than most entrants - having attended school in country areas, interstate or overseas, and most commonly attended state and technical schools. More than half had no formal post-secondary qualifications. Almost without exception they came from families with no history of University education. Because the number of Early Leavers is so small no formal comparison is made with the total University population.

ii) Performance

The academic performance of the Early Leavers has been remarkably high. The pass rate each year has been above 80 per cent, the number of graded passes above 40 per cent for each year of the first two intakes, and 27 per cent for the 1976 intake. Evidence from successive years will be needed to ascertain whether later intakes will do more poorly.

iii) Withdrawal Rate

Between 10 and 18 per cent of Early Leavers have withdrawn each year. Part of the withdrawal rate is temporary, part of it does not relate to failure - e.g. it includes transferral to other Universities. Reasons given for withdrawal suggest that Early Leavers are under particular stresses - most notably in their personal lives, but also in adjusting to the unfamiliar demands of University life. This might be lessened by providing entrants with advice and access to assistance at the outset of the course.

iv) Evidence of Disadvantage

Most entrants seem to have a prima facie case of educational disadvantage. This was chiefly a mixture of educationally unfavourable family background or sudden changes in family circumstances such as death of a parent. It may be that requesting elaboration of reasons for 'disadvantage' is unnecessary, since failure to complete secondary school is in itself evidence of deprivation.

v) Reasons for Attending University

The most commonly cited reasons for coming to University were for the sake of the qualification and for personal satisfaction. Women, more frequently than men, thought a degree would help them to find a more satisfying job.

vi) Special Difficulties

There was evidence of widespread difficulty amongst Early Leavers in both their University work and in their private lives.

Course

Most difficulty was experienced in the first term and the first year of the course. In particular there was ignorance about what was expected in writing essays and preparing assignments, about how to study, and inadequate mathematical background for some subjects. These difficulties were coupled with anxiety and tension. This is an area in which initial problems of adjustment could be alleviated.

Personal Life

Early Leavers appeared to be subject to a great deal of strain in their personal lives. This arose from lack of support from spouses, guilt and conflict over duties of family, financial difficulties and ill-health of entrants or members of their family. Another area of tension arose from feeling cut off from previous social activities and sometimes rejected by friends. For a number there was an additional conflict between study, work and family priorities.

vii) Method of Selection

There is evidence from outside this report that 'unqualified' students frequently perform more poorly on aptitude tests than 'normal' entrants and yet out perform them at University. Motivation rather than aptitude appears to be the more important ingredient in success. The placing of the onus on Early Leavers to demonstrate that they are at least of equal ability as 'normal' entrants by means of an aptitude test may be set unnecessarily high.

viii) Recommendations

The report makes two sets of recommendations, one in relation to method of selection, the other to the need for special assistance.

Method of Selection

1) that the method of selection be altered to give greater emphasis to motivation for study and less to 'disadvantage' and aptitude -

i) Completion of full time school at least five years before.

ii) May not have completed HSC.

iii) Submission of an essay.

iv) Aptitude test to gauge a minimum level of ability.

v) Attendance at a compulsory meeting at which advised and warned of likely difficulties, prior to selection.

(In placing greater emphasis on motivation, further consideration should be given to how binding is the requirement that 'Early Leavers' be demonstrably of equal ability as the 'normal' entrants they displace. Certainly their performance suggests that they perform well above average).

Special Assistance

2) that special assistance be given initially, in the form of -

i) An Orientation meeting.

ii) Individual guidance from a sympathetic tutor, at least during the first year.

TABLE 2: Fate of Applicants by Sex

Sex of applicants	No. of applicants				Eligible for test				Rejected on tests				Rejected by faculty				Enrolled			
	Year				Year				Year				Year				Year			
	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77	74	75	76	77
Arts																				
Male	122	102	94	62	59	45	59	53	39	26	37	26	11	8	8	19	9	11	14	8
Female	199	165	141	103	100	87	76	96	73	60	55	40	17	14	7	38	11	13	13	18
Other faculties																				
Male	100	132	96	53	45	100	52	33	13	60	41	26	17	30	1	2	15	10	9	5
Female	32	35	32	19	20	37	19	10	9	16	16	8	6	8			3	3	2	2
All faculties																				
Male	222	234	190	115	104	145	111	86	52	86	78	52	28	38	9	21	24	21	23	13
Female	231	200	173	122	120	114	95	106	82	76	71	48	23	22	7	38	14	16	15	20
Total	453	434	363	237	224	259	206	192	134	162	149	100	51	60	16	59	38	37	38	33

3. PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF ENTRANTS

The following tables provide some information about the social and educational characteristics of entrants and may also help in understanding some of the problems they face. Since the number of places offered is so small no useful purpose is served by comparing them with the total University intake.

3.1 Personal Characteristics

TABLE 3: Sex and Age of Entrants

Age	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
≤ 24	2	1	2	2	-	-	3	1
25-34	16	7	8	9	12	7	4	14
35-44	6	4	6	4	10	7	6	3
≥ 45	-	2	5	1	1	1	-	2
Total	24	14	21	16	23	15	13	20

Most entrants fall into the age group 25-34. There is a sizeable group 35 and over. Since lack of opportunity to undertake HSC subsequent to leaving school is one of the criteria for selection, it seems right that capable older applicants be given a chance to attend University rather than spend several years studying for the HSC. There is little difference in the ages of men and women entrants.

TABLE 4: Marital Status

Marital Status	Year of Entry			
	1974	1975	1976	1977
Single	8	8	11	5
Married	27	26	25	21
Other	3	3	2	7
Total	38	37	38	33

Table 4 sets out the marital status of entrants and Table 5 shows the numbers of entrants with dependent children.

TABLE 5: Entrants with Dependent Children

No. of Children	Year of Entry		
	1974	1975	1976
0	14	11	13
1-2	15	15	18
⩾ 3	8	10	5
No inform.	-	1	2
Total	38	37	38

TABLE 6: Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Year of Entry			
	1974	1975	1976	1977
Australia	28	29	29	23
U.K.	6	2	7	6
Europe	3	3	-	2
Other	-	-	2	1
No inform.	1	3	-	1
Total	38	37	38	33

Table 6 sets out country of birth of entrants. They are chiefly Australian-born apart from a significant group of British-born entrants in each year.

TABLE 7: Number of Siblings with Tertiary Education

No. of siblings with tertiary educ.	Year of Entry		
	1974	1975	1976
None	25	24	20
1	7	3	5
⩽ 2	-	4	5
No inform.	6	6	8
Total	38	37	38

Table 7 presents some incomplete data on the number of Early Leavers with siblings who have undertaken tertiary education. Few Early Leavers had a brother or sister who had done so.

3.2 Education and Occupational Background of Entrants

The following tables summarise information about the educational and occupational backgrounds of the Early Leavers and help to build up a profile of the students entering under the Scheme.

TABLE 8: Type of Secondary School and Sex of Entrants

Type of School	Year							
	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
State high	14	4	7	5	9	4	6	10
Technical	2		5	2	2	1	1	
Catholic	7	3	2	3	5	4	4	3
Independent		2	1	1	3	3		2
O'seas/Other	1	4	2	5	4	3	1	5
No inform.		1	4				1	
Total	24	14	21	16	23	15	13	20

Most of these entrants received their secondary education in state high schools. Few entrants had attended private schools. A significant group received their secondary education at Catholic schools. Quite a number however were educated outside of the Australian system or in technical schools which do not prepare students for University.

TABLE 9: Location of Secondary School

Location of School	Year of Entry			
	1974	1975	1976	1977
Metropolitan	20	18	23	19
Non-metropolitan	9	8	8	2
Interstate	4	1	-	5
Overseas	5	5	7	6
No inform.	-	5	-	1
Total	38	37	38	33

These entrants tended to have received their secondary schooling outside of the Melbourne metropolitan area. Almost half the entrants in each year had received their secondary education either in rural areas, interstate or overseas.

TABLE 10: Years of Secondary Schooling

Level of Schooling	Year of Entry			
	1974	1975	1976	1977
≤ 2 yrs.	4	18	5	5
3 yrs.	9		3	
4 yrs.	11	9	9	8
5 yrs.	12	10	18	18
6 yrs.	1		3	2
No inform.	1			
Total	38	37	38	33

Table 10 represents the number of years that entrants spent in secondary school. In 1974 and 1975 more than half the entrants had spent four or less years at high school. The 1976 and 1977 entrants were more inclined to have spent longer at school.

TABLE 11: Previous Occupation of Entrants*

Previous Occupation	Year of Entry							
	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Professional	6	3	7	2	4	7	1	5
Managerial/Executive/ Administrative	7	1	5		6		4	1
Clerical/Secretarial	7	6	1	10	1	8	5	11
Sales		1			4			
Farmers	1		1		2			
Transport/Communication	1		1				1	
Craftsmen/Production Process	1		2	1	3		1	
Service/Sport/ Recreation								2
Armed Forces			1		1			
Other		2		1	2			
No information/ not employed	1	1	3	2			1	1
Total	24	14	21	16	23	15	13	20

* Categories according to Classification and Classified List of Occupations, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 11 gives an indication of the type of occupations of Early Leavers. Many entrants particularly men had proved their capacities in professional or managerial jobs. However a number of the men and many of the women may have had the scope of their jobs narrowed by virtue of lack of qualifications. The largest group were clerical or secretarial workers though this group is dominated by women.

Table 12 sets out the nature of their post-secondary qualifications and the number of entrants with such.

TABLE 12: Post Secondary Qualifications

Post-secondary Qualifications	Year of Entry							
	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Accountancy	4		2					
Advertising	1							
Business Studies			2		2		1	
Insurance					1		1	
Nursing	1			1		2		1
Secretarial		2		4		4		3
Teaching	1	3	1	1		3	1	2
Technical	2		3		1			
Trade					1		1	
Other Medical				2		1		1
Other	2				3		1	
None	13	8	9	7	15	4	7	13
No information		1	4	1		1	1	
Total	24	14	21	15	23	15	13	20

Half or less of the entrants in each year had no formal post-secondary qualifications. The qualifications which were held tended to be managerial/business studies oriented, especially in the case of men, rather than trade or technical qualifications. The qualifications of the women were almost exclusively the traditional courses - secretarial, teaching or nursing. Secondary school studies undertaken after leaving school are not recorded here.

Table 13 gives a breakdown of the number of years between leaving full time school and entry into Monash.

TABLE 13: Number of Years Between Leaving School and Attending University

No. of years since leaving full time school	Year of Entry			
	1974	1975	1976	1977
5 years	2	1	-	-
6-10	6	8	3	9
11-15	10	6	13	9
16-20	10	8	9	9
21-25	3	5	8	9
26-30	4	2	3	1
⩾ 31	2	5	2	5
No information	1	2	-	-
Total	38	37	38	33

By far the majority of Early Leavers had left full-time schooling at least 10 years previously.

4. COURSE

Table 14 sets out the number of Early Leavers enrolled in each faculty.

TABLE 14: Faculty Enrolment

Faculty	Year of Entry							
	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Arts	9	11	11	13	14	13	8	18
Economics	10	3	5		4		2	1
Law	5	1	5	3	5	2	3	1
Medicine	1							
Total	24	14	21	16	23	15	13	20

Arts is the faculty which absorbs most of the Early Leavers. The number entering Economics and Law has dropped. Of those selected into these two faculties most were men. The decline in the number of entrants into these faculties partially explains the lower overall representation of men in 1977. However it should also be noted that the proportion of women selected for Arts was higher in 1977 than in previous years. Apart from a single entrant to Medicine in 1974 no Early Leavers have entered Science, Engineering or Medicine.

Table 15 sets out the number of Early Leavers enrolled full-time and part-time by sex.

TABLE 15: Sex by Full-time/Part-time Enrolment

Type of Enrolment	Year of Entry							
	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T
Male	12	12	14	8	9	14	5	8
Female	8	6	10	5	7	8	9	11
Total	20	18	24	13	16	22	14	19

In 1975 a greater number of the Early Leavers enrolled full-time. This may have been influenced by the introduction of the N.E.A.T. Scheme which provided a new source of finance for older students. Women were more likely to enrol full-time than men.

PART III

5. PERFORMANCE

Table 16 presents subject results of Early Leavers in the first three years of the Scheme.

TABLE 16: Performance of Early Leavers

Cohort	Students enrolled	Students completing year	Grades*					Total no. of subjects	Subjects passed %
			D	C	P	NN	WD		
1974 Entrants									
Year 1 (1974)	38	33	9	28	43	6	2	88	90
Year 2 (1975)	29	28	14	22	37	4	2	79	92
Year 3 (1976)	30	27	16	20	19	10	4	69	79
1975 Entrants									
Year 1 (1975)	37	33	19	28	48	2	6	102	93
Year 2 (1976)	31	29	15	17	30	3	11	76	81
1976 Entrants									
Year 1 (1976)	38	34	6	19	52	10	3	90	85

* Grades:

D - Distinction or high distinction
C - Credit
P - Pass (includes P 11 results)
NN - Fail
WD - Withdrew

The highly successful performance of these entrants is apparent from observation of Table 16. In each year the 1974 and 1975 intakes have achieved a percentage of credit or better results of over 40 per cent. For the 1976 intake the equivalent figure was 27 per cent. Moreover the statistics conceal individual results of a quite outstanding nature.

A considerable number of these entrants have joined honours schools, others have commenced combined degrees.

Subjects recorded as failures are frequently only technically so - i.e. students mostly did not sit for the examination.

Examination of the results does not suggest that the Early Leavers are performing poorly in any of the three faculties to which they are admitted - Arts, Economics and Politics or Law. Although the level of results has been dominated by the large number of Arts students, there has been a high level of achievement in both Law and Economics.

6. WITHDRAWAL RATES OF EARLY LEAVERS (1974-1976)

Table 17 presents the rate of withdrawal of Early Leavers from their courses over the period 1974-1976 for full-time and part-time students.

TABLE 17: Withdrawal from Course by Full-time/Part-time

Cohort	Number Withdrew		Total Withdrawal Rate		
	Full time	Part time	n	% per year	% of intake
1974 Entrants					
Year 1 (1974)	4	1	5/38	13	
Year 2 (1975)	3	3	6/33	18	29
Year 3 (1976)	1	2	3/30	10	29
1975 Entrants					
Year 1 (1975)	3	1	4/37	11	
Year 2 (1976)	3	3	6/33	18	27
1976 Entrants					
Year 1 (1976)	1	5	6/38	15	

For the purposes of the above table Withdrawal has been interpreted as officially or unofficially discontinued, deferred or excluded. Because of the small number of entrants no useful purpose is served by comparing their rate of withdrawal with the total student population.

An examination of reasons for withdrawal casts some light on these statistics. Certainly withdrawal is not synonymous with examination failure. Two students in the 1974 intake, and one student in the 1975 intake, on the successful completion of first year transferred to other universities. (Although this is not recorded in Table 17 three students

from the 1976 intake also transferred to universities interstate.) As a group Early Leavers seem to be subjected to pressures quite different from younger students. Others have withdrawn despite successful results. To this extent the figures are misleading. Only a series of case studies would really do justice to the severity of pressures upon them. Table 18 is an attempt to categorise the reasons for withdrawal.

TABLE 18: Reasons for Withdrawal from Course

Reason for Withdrawal	N
1. Inability to adjust to the University	7
2. Marital and family problems	7
3. Transferred to other University	3
4. Ill health	2
5. Demands of Employment	2
6. Pregnancy	1
7. Overseas	1
8. Financial problems	1
9. Failure	1
10. No information	5
Total number of withdrawals	30

What is striking about reasons given for withdrawal is their severity and genuineness. Whereas younger students are frequently confused about their reasons for dropping out of University or give rationalisations, with these students the reasons given are usually in the singular and lack exaggeration or confusion. The frequency with which 'Inability to adjust to the University' and marital and other domestic problems occur suggests that the University itself could assist students initially in adjusting to the University through a special Orientation or preparatory programme. These problems are certainly not confined only to the students who actually withdraw from their courses.

The following are the statements of several students who withdrew because unable to adjust to the University. Difficulty adjusting was, perhaps surprisingly, more frequent amongst the younger entrants.

> During the five years since I left school, I had looked upon university as a structure I felt sure I could relate to and as a method of realising my ideals. I expected a few problems catching up on the work I had missed, but I had not expected any emotional problems in adapting to University ... I found it to be a very isolating and impersonal world, in which little was familiar. I felt disappointed and confused and found it hard to concentrate on my work.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, in early 20's who dropped out in first term, 1974)

> Felt alienated - not accepted as I am. (I) emerged a stereotype of what a student should be doing - intellectual arguments, going around in circles, marks ... A distraction from being myself.
> (Full time, Arts, man, aged 27 - withdrew after an outstanding first year, 1975)

> No idea how to cope, lonely, no idea of study method.
> (Full time, Economics, woman, aged 22 who did not complete first year, 1974)

A further breakdown of the withdrawal rate by faculty of entrance does not suggest that withdrawal occurs more frequently in any faculty.

PART IV

7. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The 1974 Early Leavers' intake were interviewed by phone and in a few cases by written questionnaire or personal interview in March 1975 by means of a structured interview schedule. They were re-interviewed between September and November in 1976.

The 1975 intake were interviewed between September and November in 1976 mostly by personal interview but in some cases by phone or written questionnaire. The same structured interview schedule was used in each method of interview.

Responses of the 1974 and 1975 Early Leaver intakes are for the most part, compared. Some additional questions were also asked of students who had withdrawn from their course. (Copies of the interview schedules are attached - see Appendix B)

Response Rate

1974 Intake

In 1974, 36 out of 38 entrants were interviewed. Of those not able to be contacted one was a student excluded from the University, the other successfully passed first year.

Of the 29 students re-enrolled in 1975, 26 were interviewed. Of those not contacted two had subsequently deferred and the third though enrolled, his current address was unknown.

1975 Intake

Of the 37 entrants in the 1975 intake, 32 were interviewed. Of those not interviewed one student refused, two others were too ill and two had withdrawn and their current address unknown.

Responses to the Questionnaire

7.1.1 Experience of the University

Both intakes were asked -

How did you find your first experience of the University?

There was a remarkable similarity in the comments made by both intakes about their initial experience of Monash. There was a widespread feeling

of bewilderment with the size and impersonality of the University, confusion about what was expected in classes, in private study and in assignments. Women, in particular, were more inclined to express lack of confidence in their ability to do the work. Some students, particularly men, also felt alienated from younger students. A number of entrants said their confidence was boosted after assignments etc. had been assessed. Comments articulating these attitudes were -

> Very confusing. Felt very inadequate, lacked confidence. Feeling soon went. Felt I had not real prerequisites. After a couple of essays (I was) all right, settled down.
> (Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Terribly bewildering. Petrified for first few weeks until after first few essays. Good marks - confidence.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Strange, apprehensive, lacked confidence at first. Didn't know what was expected. I lacked study habit.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)
>
> Overwhelmingly big - feeling of anonymity, non-identity, reversal of status.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)
>
> First term traumatised - surprised to get a place. Did not know what standard expected. Difficulty with first essays - had a good tutor in history who went through the essay - really helped.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)
>
> Bewildering. Move from the disciplined business world to a free and easy atmosphere of thousands of undirected talents was disconcerting until contact was made with similarly situated mature age students.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)
>
> Tough - had not written for twenty years. I had difficulty putting it down on paper. Probably better if I had done HSC. Other pressures too with family.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)
>
> Of being lost ... the numbers of students amazed and disconcerted me.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1975)
>
> Some really freaky kids around the place. Found it difficult to communicate with full-time students. Found them very young. Found part timers easier ...
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)
>
> Hard to adapt to it.
> (Full time, Law, man, 1974)

Elsewhere (see page 18) some comments of students who found adjustment so difficult that they dropped out in the first year have been quoted.

A small number of students recalled few difficulties in settling into Monash. Several such comments were.

> Stimulating, interesting, felt I had an advantage ... Had confidence in stating a case.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1974)

> Proud and happy - tutorials and lectures were exciting. I looked forward to going.
> (Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

7.1.2 Second and Later Year Experience

In 1976, both intakes were asked -

> How did you find your second (and third) year(s)?

Comments about later years do not centre so much on uncertainty about competence and difficulties in relating to younger students. For some students the novelty of the University seems to have worn off. The nature of later year difficulties centres around heaviness of workloads, changes in personal life that increase pressures on the student and jadedness about the value of studies being undertaken. Men seemed more prone to this loss of interest than women.

About equally as many students found their later year(s) more enjoyable. Below are comments typical of these themes -

Less enjoyable

> Second year difficult because of work (i.e. job) commitment. Didn't sit exam because of this.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1974)

> Find the workload heavier - have an instrumental attitude towards studies.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1974)

> The effort to study seems to have become harder in the third year. The novelty of first year has worn off and there is a hard slog, particularly with Economics 231 which is not inherently of great interest to me, although apparently a necessary subject for my purposes.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Less enjoyable. In first year I was conscious of being given a basic background to the following year's studies. The past two years have been disappointing in that the studies in general have tended to be far removed from vocational needs and only remotely related to the real business world.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Started this year - wanted to know myself. Felt facade of people rubbing off on me. Don't know whether I will come back.
(Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

More difficult - things have gone wrong - personal things - series of crises at home. Workwise not more difficult. Have had difficulty finding a place to study, also financial difficulties.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Lost touch with life other than Uni. life to an extent, and have developed some sort of motivational conflicts ...
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

More enjoyable

Much better than first year. Find work easier to cope with and feel less isolated. Had been highly conscious of the age gap between myself and other students for most of first year.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Easier in the sense of knowing what to expect. Subjects like accountancy seem more relevant.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

About the same. If anything I guess I have felt more at home in the past two years as the first year tended to have a certain awe about it.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

More at home - doing better - some idea now of what required. If in the same situation as last year would have rectified it. Know more about the library now, more about the resources. Reluctance at first to ask.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

In second year you know what's expected more.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Enjoyed subjects better - Anthropology particularly well conducted by the department.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

7.2 Grounds on Which Early Leavers Applied for Entry

Entrants were asked on what grounds they applied for entrance to Monash. A simple categorisation of reasons given for educational disadvantage is misleading. The most frequent reasons cited were - financial and family circumstances. Most frequently the two reasons were intermeshed. Financial sacrifices were not likely to be made in families with no aspiration or respect for University education. Migration at a crucial time during schooling and financial hardship are also interconnected in a number of cases. Other entrants attended technical or country schools not offering matriculation. Others began apprenticeships or undertook other qualifications. Several entrants had their schooling disrupted by war.

Trying to establish that the entrant had no subsequent opportunity to undertake matriculation studies is not easy. Often this will depend upon the capacities and values of the applicants.

7.3 Reasons for Seeking Entrance to the University

The 1974 and 1975 entrants were asked -

Why did you want to come to the University?

The responses to this question are divided into categories according to year and sex in Table 19 below. Most respondents gave more than one reason.

TABLE 19: Reasons for Wishing to Come to University

Reason	1974			1975		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
For the qualifications	9	6	15	4	4	8
Personal satisfaction/development	7	7	14	9	5	14
Always wanted to	2	4	6	4	3	7
Challenge	4		4	1		1
Unhappy in present job	1	2	3		5	5
To be of service in the community	1		1	1	2	3
Influence of others	1	1	2	1	1	2
For the experience of University	3		3			
Useful in present job	3		3			
Other	2		2	2		2

In both years the two most important reasons given for seeking entrance were - for the sake of the qualifications and for personal satisfaction or development. The 1974 group tended to place greater emphasis however on acquiring a degree. In both years there was a core of entrants who simply felt they 'Always wanted to' come to the University. Another group felt dissatisfied with their present occupation, particularly women. Men were more inclined to see the University as a challenge. A few students expressed a desire to be of service to the community.

Some responses typical of these categories are quoted below -

> Originally I wanted to come to university to gain a qualification which would equate me with business peers, to obtain skills in specific areas of practice, and to determine my ability to maintain a disciplined course of study.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Did nursing training and postgraduate training. Needed a degree to do what I wanted to do. Felt people do not respect you without a degree.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> Find present job unrewarding - financially and mentally. A degree was a challenge.
> (Part time, Law, man, 1974)

> Simply wanted to take up humanities studies after cold-blooded engineering.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

> For personal satisfaction and intellectual stimulation, and to gain qualifications to become a vocational guidance officer. Find present job (book-keeper) boring and without possibilities for advancement.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> So I could get a law degree and practice as a lawyer; to gain the status of the work I'm actually doing.
> (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

> I wanted to know, to discuss, clarify questions related to world view. I always wanted to continue education ... always had an ambition to go.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1974)

> No skills but knew I was capable of doing Uni. work. Something I always wanted to do. Wanted some disciplined study. I have left my options open. Because I came from the land maybe a place for me there. Economists have been telling me for a long time about the man on the land - I wanted to understand.
> (Full time, Economics, man, 1975)

7.4 Expectations of the University

Both intakes were asked in 1976 -

Has the University lived up to your expectations?

About half the students in both years considered that the University had lived up to their expectations. A few said 'no' and the rest qualified their response. Those for whom the University had lived up to their expectations for the most part did not have high or unrealistic expectations, or else they adopted the attitude that what was gained from University was dependent upon what they put into it.

Comments typical of these categories are given below.

Expectations fulfilled

> Yes. Find University very stimulating. Probably because I put a lot into it.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> Yes. It is as I thought it should be.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1974)

> Expected to acquire efficient study methods and I have. Besides this had no specific expectations when began the course.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1974)

> Yes it has. Otherwise I wouldn't have enjoyed my time there. Very satisfying - overall very satisfying.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Lived up to and more. I became side-tracked about issues because of my minority group relationships with other minority groups ... Small caf. the best experience of Uni.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Yes. I didn't come with great expectations. Had had a fair bit to do with Melbourne Uni ... I didn't have pie in the sky ideas about it. Husband is an associate of Melbourne Uni ...
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Expectations not fulfilled

The criticisms of those who gave a 'no' or qualified answer were based on disappointment that the University did not measure up to an 'ideal', in the quality of the teaching, the relevance of the subject matter, the provisions for part time students and the standard of work required.

Yes. Because part time can't join in the social activities, unable to discuss work with fellow students in an informal situation. Find kids in tutes very shy, hard to communicate with. You realise you're the only one talking.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

I had reservations about whether I'd fit in. Always envied kids coming straight from school - more open to change and new ideas.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Generally, yes. But bearing in mind that about 25% of students are part time, I don't believe that sufficient consideration is given to such things as lecture times and particularly tutorial times for part time students.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

No. Very idealistic at the beginning - University was a dream. First year too big a workload ... Two good tutors only. Tutors should have teacher training. Expected more social involvement. Lack of this due to being part time - not the fault of the University. University has provided a broader base intellectually. Before (my) knowledge was limited to the education field.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Not in as much as expected to be overwhelmed with bright young things. Found students to be pretty immature. Full of big words but not much sense. Disappointed in first year sociology - matters of common sense treated as mysteries, revelations.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

The standard of lectures not as high as expected.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes. Though one feels one can pass without knowing much.
(Full time, Law, man, 1974)

No. Not really. Whilst it is an academic institution, it lacks empathy with the world of business into which most students will eventually go.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes. A little disappointed in Arts. (Sociology and Psychology). You're not allowed to write according to your own experience. Doesn't allow for experience and originality. You're marked according to your peers. What happens to geniuses?
(Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

No. I expected lecturers and tutors to be more like human beings than public servants. Teachers should have expertise ... Didn't get to know many staff very well - perhaps their competence comes from sticking with the system.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Occasionally - (I) had a traditional view of the University - great men. I've had trouble with Economics. Philosophical subjects I love - gets the grey matter going. (I) get disappointed with the people around - nobody seems to care about things any more.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Yes and no. No, as a German I have very high esteem of the University. Very much in terms of discussion - really interested in knowledge - it's an ideal. It may be that I would be disappointed in Germany too. I'd like it to get better. Pleasantly surprised by the helpfulness of tutors and staff.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Not really. Not as hard as I thought it would be. Pretty soulless - no one wants to know anyone else.
(Part time, Law, man, 1975)

In the main yes. However, parts of the course seem to have little relevance to an actual working situation.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Could be so good and yet not. Prefer to be here than not. Own personality gets in the way - anxious don't find it easy.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

7.5 Allowances and Financial Difficulties

Both the 1974 and 1975 intakes were asked in 1976 -

Did you receive an allowance under i) T.E.A.S.
ii) N.E.A.T.?

Only full time students were financed by either T.E.A.S. or N.E.A.T. In 1976 three of the 1974 intake were on N.E.A.T. and six of the 1975 intake. Two of the 1974 intake received T.E.A.S. and seven of the 1975 intake.

The respondents were also asked -

Have you had any financial difficulties while at University?

In 1976 seventeen of the 1974 and seventeen of the 1975 intake said they had some financial difficulties in coming to the University. It should be recognised, of course, that financial hardship is a relative matter. One or two who complained of financial hardship seemed no worse off than others who said they had no trouble managing. Several others who said they did not experience financial difficulty were quite satisfied with a reduced means. For example one student commented that he had no real financial difficulties although -

> Received N.E.A.T. - $96.00 per week. Since put a means test on wife working - reduced to $23.00 per week. Got me through first year. Not really financial difficulty. I can always find a job. I work in a supermarket, cleaning at night and in the morning, sometimes at the weekend - 25 hours per week.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

A number of others, chiefly full time students had severe financial difficulty. Several students changed from full time to part time courses because of financial difficulties. Others though carrying full time course loads were working long hours on jobs. It is also worth noting that several of those who received N.E.A.T. in 1975 had their allowances reduced in 1976. One had his allowance increased. Financial difficulty appeared to be a major contributing factor in pressures in family life. Women, particularly single women, were severely affected. Those least affected financially were part time men students holding good jobs.

> Yes terrible financial difficulties - I was forced to apply for a loan to bridge the gap between termination of maintenance payments and T.E.A.S.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> Yes, forced to share accommodation which created personal problems. Applied for a $250 grant. I had to do the course part time in first year because I couldn't afford to pay crêche fees.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> This year yes! I tried to work part time - 5 nights a week to meet financial commitments but couldn't manage. Changed to part time study 1976.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Yes. This is the biggest problem.
> (Full time, Law, man, 1974)

Financial difficulties have been a constant source of anxiety and hardship throughout the course. (Changed from full time to part time studies)
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes - made it very difficult. I was retrenched in October 1975 (part time job). Worked casually over the vacation. Not certain I could continue at all. Did not get this job till April. Now working 13½ hours per week as a part time bank teller.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Yes. Have had to cut back on work as well as (having) a greater outlay. In both years had to cut back from full time to part time because of the necessity of working.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

My word. Needed a new car for all the travelling. Didn't bargain on that.
(Part time, Law, man, 1975)

Yes - bordering on bankruptcy.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

With the financial commitments of running a home, even with the combination of my wife's wage plus T.E.A.S. we just make ends meet.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

7.6 Effects on Personal Life

Several studies (Cleugh, 1972; Walker, 1975) have reported that entry into University can cause considerable conflict in the personal life of mature age students. It seems likely that the Early Leavers as a group might be at least equally prone to such problems. It was obvious from looking at withdrawal rates that a number found the pressures on home life so severe that they discontinued. To follow this question up more directly the 1974 and 1975 students were asked -

Has attending University created any particular problems in your life?

The most common problem mentioned was the strain on family life. Twelve of the 1974 intake and ten of the 1975 intake referred to difficulties created in the home life. Several of those not interviewed who had withdrawn we know had severe family or marital problems.

A second common problem reported by a number of respondents was that they found coming to University cut them off from friends and social life. Another group found that conflict arose from juggling work and university responsibilities.

Related to each of these problems were comments about feeling the pressure of time to fulfil various responsibilities.

A small group commented that University created no problems for them, but on the contrary only had a positive influence.

The 1974 students reported a greater severity of problems. This may be a function of having spent an additional year at University. Comments illustrating the nature of these problems are given below -

Problems with family life

> Not enough time to spend with family. I miss seeing the kids two mornings and three nights. Money, union fees etc., is a big problem. (I) have to study at weekend - not much time for wife and children.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)
>
> Friction at home because of lack of time.
> (Part time, Law, man, 1974)
>
> Attending university accelerated the breakdown of marriage.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Created tension at home; husband very unsympathetic, gives no moral support.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Has restricted the time available to be spent with my wife and three young children. Alternatively, I have not been free to spend time at Monash at weekends.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)
>
> It has effectively cut down a social life to one day a week, even less around exam times. I study at nights and on Sundays and this has created a good deal of tension in the home.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Yes it has disturbed family life and social relations.
(Full time, Law, man, 1975)

Strain on family life - 5 children. There is often a conflict between the need to respond to my family requirements and the demands of study.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Problems with social life

Has created a certain social alienation ... friends have generally been unsympathetic - some have dropped me.
(Part time, Ecops, woman, 1974)

Fairly rigid values, ideas have been broken down. You lose contact with old friends - interests diverge, common ground is lost.
(Full time, Law, man, 1974)

Yes. Interests have changed radically ... People began treating me differently - my boyfriend feels threatened and is hostile towards me being at University.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Besides the financial burden, feel isolated - have had to curtail social activities. Also children have missed out on attention. Husband is very understanding but the children sometimes resent the amount of time spent studying.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

... Not enough time for social activities. Have lost contact with friends.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Has created some radical changes in outlook. Becoming more radical. View friends more critically - husband a businessman, friends are Liberal ... Creating rift with husband. Doesn't take her work seriously. I'm looking for something more.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Generally the requirements of the course and the renunciation of many activities result in an unbalance which is not easy to counter without throwing in the towel.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Conflict with time and full time job

It also causes difficulties with my work. I spend a fair amount of time interstate and at conferences.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

My job is very demanding and at times I work very long hours. This combined with uni studies is very taxing and my wife and I have little free time together.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Family demands and work create problems.
(Part time, Arts, man, 1974)

Puts pressure on time - family, work, studies make conflicting demands.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes but not insurmountable. Leaving work at certain times not always very acceptable. I'm limited to five hours per week off. Advantages in the home life.
(Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

Yes. I underestimated the difficulty of getting from the city to Monash in the middle of the day. I was doing Russian and should really have attended on 4 different days - this would have needed a half day in each case, so I only went 3 days, missing 2 lectures. Also an unexpectedly strong reaction from family.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

During the time I attended I was engaged in developing a Trade Training School ... This together with a return to studies in which I had no prior experience meant that something had to give ... And as neither antidepressants nor tranquillisers helped, study had to go.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1975)

No problems

No great problems have emerged as my wife and family are behind me.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Thanks to the wholehearted support of my wife and children - no real problems have been created.
(Full time, Ecops/Law, man, 1974)

No - not specific to University. Saved me from a nervous breakdown.
(Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

No - my choice, nothing beyond my expectations.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

No - good for me.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

7.7 Sources of Tension

Several recent studies (Challis, 1976; Yallowley, 1976) have suggested that mature age students on the whole suffer more anxiety about their ability to cope, about their competence and about assessment than students who have entered university straight from school. Some observers have also suggested older students are highly competitive. Since the Early Leavers have generally had even less experience of formal education it might be expected that a number would find the University and studies a source of tension. Both the 1974 and 1975 Early Leavers were asked -

> Have your University studies been a source of tension?
> Can you specify in what way?

Some respondents partially answered this in questions 12 and 14, and their responses should be read in conjuction with section 7.6 and 7.8 of this report. Almost all those questioned considered that they did suffer from tension arising out of their studies. Some felt such tension to be a 'normal' part of university. The desire to do well was diagnosed commonly as the cause of tension and probably associated with this attitude was a frequently reported worry about assessment. This uncertainty about competence seemed to produce a good deal of competitiveness in these students. For others conflicting demands, lack of time and an inability to concentrate were perceived as the sources of tension. It is difficult to gauge the severity of the tension from these replies but they do provide a means of identifying areas of anxiety. Women appeared more prone to (or articulate about) tension than men respondents. Below are quoted examples typical of these different sources of tension.

Performance

First year - yes. This was a testing period. Felt compelled to do well and consequently worked under a great sense of pressure. Still conscientious but take a more relaxed approach now.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes - the effort to be original and to keep up a high standard of work is a strain sometimes.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes - psychosomatic illnesses due to considerable emotional stress caused by anxiety over money problems and essay writing.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Tension produced by living up to an image - confident and competent in tutorial situations, meet tutors/lecturers on equal terms, but worry must prove can handle written as well as verbal situation.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes - hate failures. Compete with oneself.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Essays - tense and preoccupied - to be expected unless utterly self-confident. Question of time to do as well as possible. In doing the very best get tense because of marking.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Yes - worrying how (I) would go - and deadlines.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

I had never done essay writing - the mechanics of footnotes - no one who could tell me that. Essays were bad technically. No help - getting uptight about that.
(Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

Only to the extent of never being satisfied with the work done. Never being quite sure whether requirements given or required were relative to the real world or artificial, purely theoretical world situations.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Pressures of time

Yes, money problems aside, it creates tension in personal relationships and in the work situation through conflicting demands made on time.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes the conflicting demands - work, university and family makes (me) anxious and irritable. Rundown earlier in the course and suffered from a nervous disorder.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes especially when lecture of purely academic nature and not relevant to the real world.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Pressure of getting things done on time - three 1,000 word essays plus at present a tute paper. Hard to get away. Unless working to a deadline find it hard to sit down and do it.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Only an added amount to a situation that was already stressful.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Yes, I seem always to be one step behind with everything, and that of course results in everything becoming increasingly more difficult and I imagine that this could easily escalate into some sort of crisis.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

One older student refreshingly commented -

No - means of relief away from tension at work - can tune off from problems at work.
(Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

7.8 Illness

Both groups of Early Leavers were asked -

Have you experienced any ill health while at Monash?

Several entrants had given ill health as a reason for withdrawal from the course. Replies to this question should be read in conjunction with Sections 7.6 and 7.7. A number of students had experienced quite severe ill health during their studies. This cannot be said with certainty to be caused by University studies, but it does seem to be associated with students experiencing other pressures within their family, at work or in coping with their studies. At least four of the respondents not interviewed we knew to be suffering severe ill health. Of those interviewed in 1976, ten of the 1974 intake reported fairly severe illnesses, and nine of the 1975 intake. Below are examples of their answers.

Yes. Unable to attend one month in first year - unable to use right hand; and one month early 1976 (foot infection).
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes. Driving taxis (for) too long hours, lowered resistance - pleurisy - a few weeks off Uni this year.
(Full time, Law man, 1974)

Became rundown - nervous disorder - get irritable, anxious.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes. Chronic asthma caused by emotional strain created by marriage breakdown. Applied for extensions on final essays on grounds of ill health and severe emotional stress.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes. Psychosomatic illnesses, experienced considerable emotional stress - anxiety over money problems and essay writing.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes. Resistance has been low. Ill most of this year.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes. Fractured (both) arms. (On different occasions)
(Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

Sick. Gave away business ... partner fell through ... not caused by University studies.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Yes. Glandular fever at beginning of the year - not necessarily due to Monash.
(Part time, Law, man, 1975)

Recently returned to duty after nearly 6 weeks leave to enable me to collect my scattered wits and nerves. When one attempts to do too much then one must pay in one way or another.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Yes. Continual bad health caused by an infectious disease ... undiagnosed and treated asymptomatically.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Some depression, a lot of anxiety and possibly an ulcer; but I've not been confined to bed with any lasting illness.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1976)

One man commented -

No ... apart from sitting up in bed at night while still asleep quoting MC = AC = MR = P = YUK!
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

7.9 Difficulty With Course

Students were asked in 1976 -

> Have you had difficulty with any particular subject or area of your studies?

The most frequently cited difficulties were in subjects requiring some technical background knowledge, particularly mathematical, such as Economics, Psychology and Computer Science. The other very commonly cited difficulty was in essay writing. This problem appears to be worst in first year. The 1974 intake referred to it frequently when first interviewed and less frequently in 1976. On the other hand the 1975 entrants had a fresher memory of their initial difficulties. It does seem to be an area in which students could be given guidance early. Both these difficulties are areas where lack of formal schooling has probably hampered Early Leavers most. A third area of difficulty arises from fear of or unfamiliarity with examinations. Below are some typical comments.

Difficulty with subjects requiring some knowledge of mathematics

> Statistics - took remedial maths course offered by the Economics Department. Gap in schooling has made maths a problem.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Areas such as statistics and other economic techniques involving higher maths have given me trouble.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Yes. It is 16 years since I attended high school (and then only to Form 4) and I have forgotten most of my maths knowledge. Although I have subsequently been able to recall a fair amount about basic maths problems at times, I am told (in one instance) - "go away I am not an arithmetic teacher".
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Psychology - statistics - have to do statistics again in Sociology. Lack of practice, inability in the maths area.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> With the unreal, abstract sections of micro and macro economics. With some of the maths. I left high school in 1944, most systems being taught evolved after that date and required extra work.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Difficulty with essay writing

Lack of essay technique in first year.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Essay writing. Personality/ideas clash with Sociology tutor caused her to drop the subject.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

No, except in first year because didn't know what was required, for example, in essays.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1974)

Yes - found work difficult. Never written an essay in my life - took a while - thinking about the big questions. Felt (I was) carrying the earth on my finger.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

No. Essays difficult - only now beginning to understand what writing an essay is - some help would have been useful.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Essays - frustrated with essay writing - taking too long on them - research not the problem.
(Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

History - spent more time and (got) lowest mark for (credit). (Problem) orientating self to Chinese history. Long time to get familiar with history. Lot of work attached to history - very rigorous - helped me with other subjects.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Dropped English in first year. Not sure what required in an essay. Took a couple of essays before worked it out a bit. Would have liked a few lessons on this.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Difficulty with exams

Terrified at the thought of exams - picked subjects in which no exam.
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Exams - picking kinds of answers - hard to find out what sort of answers they want. Lack of experience in exam work.
(Full time, Law, man, 1975)

7.10 Problems in Being an Early Leaver or Mature Age Student

Both groups of students were asked in 1976 -

> Are there any special problems in being an Early Leaver or mature age student?

About one quarter of the group considered that they had no special problems as an Early Leaver or mature age student, indeed a number went on to say that there were advantages in being an older student. For example one student said -

> No - maturity an advantage - fewer distractions. Able to relate to all age groups.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

and another

> No - (an) advantage. Keener to do well - don't come from one school to another - more sense than kids.
> (Part time, Law, man, 1975)

A number of respondents, unprompted, commented on relating to younger students. Rarely did a respondent say he (she) did not get on well with younger students. However the very frequency of the concern with younger students perhaps implies an uneasiness. Certainly the older students see themselves apart from younger students. Below are some comments on this subject -

> No, on the contrary - found it a considerable advantage in first year. N-types soon catch up in terms of confidence.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1974)

> Also we tend to be alienated somewhat from the rest of the university population. I particularly was conscious of this in my first year, as I felt conspicuous in arriving at lectures/tutorials in business dress. Full time students tend to have little to do with part-timers (and I guess vice versa also) although I guess the age factor also has something to do with this.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Yes - getting to know people like you - with children, and who've gone through separation and divorce. Age and experience frightens off younger students.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> Fit in better than most because look young - visually slots into the mainstream of students. While younger friends relate better to mature age students. Experience an asset in discussion, especially in Law - gives one a different perception.
> (Full time, Law, man, 1974)

> Conscious always of the age gap between herself and other students, and feels out of the mainstream of Uni life. This, together with having to work, to rush away after lectures and tutorials created a sense of isolation.
> (Part time, Ecops, woman, 1974)

> No - at first like a lost soul - conscious of age difference and lack of education. But found students accepted me. There is a variety in ages and I drift towards those around the same age. I'm a gregarious person.
> (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

> Not a minority group as a mature age student. Younger students have a brashness about them. Can feel embarrassed about how to do things. If it hadn't been for a few helpful people would have been very lonely.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

> The requirement to conform to the tutors' and lecturers' abstractions from the real world which is accepted by minors, places a strain, and sometimes alienates tutors, with subsequent problems.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

The other most commonly cited problem was that of being a part time student. A number of students mentioned difficulty in borrowing and returning books from the library during the prescribed hours, working out a timetable to fit in with working hours - this becomes more difficult in later years when students have to organise subject sequences. Another commonly mentioned problem which has been discussed earlier in this report was that of pressure of time - particularly in relation to the needs of a family and job. Several students also mentioned lack of formal education - particularly in maths and essay writing which left them at a disadvantage compared with other students. One other problem mentioned by a few students was difficulty in getting down to work, in concentrating on studies. There is no way of knowing whether this is more of a problem for students out of the habit of studying. Several such comments were -

Not personally but difficulty of some mature age students getting down to work when have left studying - families.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Difficulty getting down to work - not special for Early Leavers. Initially not knowing whether can cope. (I) don't feel an outsider - plenty of older women like myself.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

No - probably hardest thing buckling down to study.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

7.11 Change in Attitude to the University

Since the 1974 intake had entered their third year of University studies, they were additionally asked in 1976 -

Has your attitude to studies or the University changed since first year?
Can you specify in what ways?

The intention of this question was to see whether students felt they had benefited from their time at University, whether their initial motivation was holding firm. Seven of those interviewed felt their attitudes had not changed at all. Other responses were divided fairly evenly between those who felt they had grown cynical of the University and its standards, and those who found they could now enjoy their studies more. Below are given some examples of these types of attitudes.

More 'cynical' about University

Less idealistic. Don't believe it's necessary to attend lectures and tutes to pass.
(Part time, Law, man, 1974)

Yes - realise you can get through without very much effort - disillusioning.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

No - much keener at the start - had to take it more slowly (for health's sake). Not so enjoyable - more realistic view.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Not really. Realise how little work needed to just pass.
(Full time, Law, man, 1974)

Yes. I take it more in my stride. More cynical now due to experience like - Politics tutor taking group for the last 7 weeks only, was openly disgruntled about this. In Economic History a brilliant student was downgraded in the essay he submitted because it ran contrary to the accepted point of view ...
(Part time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Yes. I now aim at a pass rather than to do really well. I find it hard to maintain interest. I often feel now, when I am at lectures, that I would be better off back at work. I hope however to find more interesting material at a later date - perhaps (in) fifth year.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

More 'relaxed' about University

Became more interested, especially (in) Classical Civilisation which had little knowledge of.
(Full time, Arts, man, 1974)

Yes! more relaxed.
(Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

More relaxed. (In) first year unsure of what's expected - this was biggest problem. Probably worked harder than was necessary.
(Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

Yes - though still conscientious take(s) studies more in stride and feels confident and capable. First year in a fog. Did a lot of unnecessary work and was afraid of failing - would have been great let down to family and friends.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

Feel(s) more confident of academic ability and consequently relaxed a bit. Doesn't work so frantically as in first year.
(Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

7.12 Employment Whilst Attending University

Financial difficulty while attending University has been discussed earlier in this report. In order to complement this information and to ascertain what additional pressures Early Leavers have to cope with, both intakes were asked in 1976 -

a) Have you had a job while attending University this year?

b) Is it part time or full time? (If part time) How many hours per week do you spend on it?

Only information about 1976 is recorded here. There is no attempt to suggest that a part time job is necessarily detrimental to studies.

Of the 1974 intake interviewed in 1976, ten of the part time students were in full time employment. One other part time woman student was teaching for six hours per week. Of the fifteen full time students interviewed six had regular jobs during term time - five of those students were males. The full time women students (8) also for the most part had domestic duties. One student was working in excess of twenty hours per week, another preferred not to reveal how much he was working, another spent three nights a week taxi-driving. The others tended to be working ten hours or less per week on outside employment. Three students had changed from full time to part time studies between 1974 and 1976 - financial problems appear to have been the most important reason for doing so.

Of the 1975 intake interviewed in 1976 nine of the part time students were in full time employment. The other four part timers were women with domestic responsibilities including one who was also working six hours a week as a cleaner. Seven full time students had part time employment. Three of these were working in excess of twenty hours per week. Thirteen other full time students were not working apart from vacation jobs. Six of these were women. Between 1975 and 1976 only one student had changed from full time to part time study.

In the 1975 intake those full time students with part time jobs tended to be working for longer hours than their counterparts in the 1974 intake. It is likely that by third year students have worked out a compromise between amount of outside work that is necessary and what is practical in relation to study requirements.

7.13 Time Spent in Private Study

When the first intake of Early Leavers was interviewed in 1975 it was apparent both implicitly and explicitly from their responses that they were particularly conscientious and hardworking. In 1976 both intakes were asked -

> Approximately how many hours per week do you spend in private study?

Not surprisingly a number of students found this a difficult question to answer and it is the overall attitude to work which is more revealing. In Table 20 the responses are given separately for part time and full time students.

TABLE 20: No. of hours spent in private study per week in 1976 for full time and part time students

Type of Enrolment	No. of hours per week	Year of intake	
		1974	1975
Full time	45-50	1	4
	30-40		2
	25-30	2	2
	20-25	4	
	15-20	2	2
	10-15		2
Part time	25-30		2
	20	1	1
	10-20	4	2
	5-10	2	3
	5	1	2

The 1975 intake tended to give higher estimates of the amount of time spent in study each week. It may be that by third year students have learned to work more efficiently or having grown more confident of their ability are less insecure about amount of work necessary. The following are comments from some students who found it difficult to estimate time spent in study.

> Never stop. Spend most of (my) time studying. Listen to language tapes while driving.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Varies. Spend all available time studying.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)
>
> Lump it all together, only work under pressure - do more in third term. Worked harder in first year. Pays off now.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)
>
> Couldn't say - think about it all the time.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)
>
> Varies from week to week. (I) work every night - consistently.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

7.14 Plans for Graduation

In 1976 both intakes were asked -

> What do you plan to do when you graduate from Monash?

Answers to this question may be divided roughly into three types -

- those who plan to continue in their present jobs or return to the job they had before beginning the course
- those who are undecided about what they will do, and
- those who have plans for a new career.

In both years the greatest number of entrants had a plan for the type of job they wanted after graduation. Eleven of the first intake and twenty-one of the second intake had a fairly clear idea of what they wanted to do on completion of the degree. Additionally ten of the 1974 intake and two of the 1975 intake intended to continue in their present jobs. Five of the 1974 intake and seven of the 1975 intake did not know or did not answer the question. Almost all the 'undecided' group were Arts students.

A number of these students have ambitions of doing postgraduate studies -

> Would like to come back in 1977 or 1978 to do M.B.A. part time.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Don't know. Go back to nursing but not in the same position. Want to do a Ph.D. eventually.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> At the moment probably go on to postgraduate work ...
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> Like to do postgraduate work in sociology.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> Depends on results. Would like to do postgraduate studies.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

A number of students hope to do either teaching or be selected for the social work course. Apart from students continuing in their present jobs, Law students were the most convinced about what they wanted to do - either work in private practice, go to the bar or enter the public service. A small group of students saw themselves as being of service to the community by virtue of their work.

> Work with the A.L.P., trade union movement.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> An ideal would be to spend some time on the campus in some capacity assisting the young students. There is a tremendous vacuum in worthwile leadership for the student ...
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Take in cases from the Women's Movement. Need the degree to take cases into the courts. This is what is needed.
> (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

> Thought round retirement - might retire early - use it in charity work or something like that. Not a means to an end in my employment.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

7.15 Need for Special Help

Both intakes were asked -

> Do you think there is any help that should be given to Early Leavers?

Seven students in each year considered that Early Leavers ought not to be given or did not need any special assistance. These students felt that they were at no disadvantage in relation to other students, or that they should sink or swim on their own merits. However by far the majority of students felt that they would have benefited from some special help. In both years the most frequently expressed need was for assistance in essay-writing, examination skills, study methods and basic maths. A few typical comments of this sort were -

> Possibly in essay-writing - no idea how to structure essays.
> (Part time, Law, man, 1974)

> Yes - some sort of refresher course in basic maths would be very advantageous. Maths seems to come into almost all subjects in all faculties at some time or other. Others I have contacted on this matter have had the same problems as myself.
> (Part time, Ecops, man, 1974)

> Legal writing especially, exams skills. Too much assumed by staff - skills not taught. Worse for older people.
> (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

> Would have been of assistance if there had been - teach you how to apply yourself to studies, to reading, writing essays. My children express themselves better than me.
> (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

> Orientation for older students. Need some leads in how to write essays.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Another group of students said they would have liked the opportunity to meet other Early Leavers or older students. This request came most from the 1975 entrants to whom the strangeness of the first months at University was closer. Several such comments were -

> Would enjoy meeting others. To see how (they) tackled problems of getting down to study initially. Need to know problems first, then meet.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> Yes I do believe Early Leavers could benefit from a preliminary session en masse from all faculties to allow contact with similar age and interest groups. I believe the entry into the first few courses would have been just that much less traumatic.
> (Full time, Ecops, man, 1975)

Several students felt they would have benefited from closer contact with a tutor or someone else able to give guidance.

> Tutors should offer assistance on a more formal basis - i.e. make themselves available for consultation at particular times. Fear of inconveniencing staff members by coming at inopportune times.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1974)

> Could have been warned about certain things. Not official people but someone with experience. Student counsellor said - you'll be right, piss off. Eventually gave me some blurb (on essay writing). Came easy from then on. Seeing someone who is in a position who would listen or ask and show me what I could do. Didn't like going to student counselling.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Something I would have liked - someone like myself - an older person on campus to talk about the validity of what happened. Refer students to one another.
> (Part time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Some Early Leavers need encouragement from tutors/lecturers to calm initial fears - you are different whether you like it or not.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

A smaller group of students felt that their problems were not those of being an Early Leaver but of being a part timer. Thus four students in the '74 intake and two in the '75 intake mentioned the problem of part timers borrowing library books overnight. Four other students mentioned the lack of provision for part timers with full time jobs in terms of times at which lectures were available and the associated problem of planning subject sequences.

7.16 Relations with Staff

In order to ascertain what sort of help Early Leavers received from staff and what they felt they needed, the 1975 intake was asked -

> Have you received encouragement from members of staff?

Ten students made positive comments about the helpfulness of staff and this seems to have been most important in overcoming initial difficulties for a number of students. One group of students mentioned feeling a need for encouragement. Three students made quite negative comments about their contact with academic staff. The rest (7) who answered this question were half-hearted in their attitude. Below are responses exemplifying each of these categories.

Positive experience

> Encouragement from most tutors. A good history tutor (in first year). (After) a bad first essay went through essay and really helped.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

> I had a very encouraging English tutor last year. Apart from her no active encouragement.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

> Yes they are helpful - ready to make appointments - (they're) available (but) don't come and pat you on the back. Found them ... most outstandingly helpful - give up lunch hour, lend books.
> (Part time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Negative experience

> Very little encouragement and in some cases very positive discouragement.
> (Full time, Arts, man, 1975)

Uncommitted attitude

> At least no discouragement.
> (Full time, Arts, woman, 1975)

Nothing special - not singled out. At times could be fairer if lecturer aware of background of Early Leaver. (Full time, Law, man, 1975)

Yes from 50%. Others not interested. Personality aspect of teacher - either interested or impersonal. (Full time, Law, woman, 1975)

7.17 Other Comments

Finally entrants were asked if they had any further comments to make. A number of the respondents wished to thank the University for the introduction of the Scheme, a number also recommending its extension. Another sizeable group requested feedback on the success of the Scheme. Some of the respondents re-iterated comments made elsewhere - lack of facilities for part time and mature age students, some hostility or lack of acceptance by other students (i.e. both as Early Leavers and as mature age students) and several made pleas for greater financial assistance. Several students made perceptive comments about the need for change in course organisation and content.

PART V

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Type of Entrants (1974-1977)

Apart from 1977 more men have entered under the Scheme than women. The entrants come almost entirely from the age bracket 25-44. Not surprisingly most are married with dependent children. They are by and large Australian-born with a significant sprinkling of British-born migrants. Generally they come from families in which they are the only member to have undertaken tertiary education. The largest group attended State high or technical schools, few having gone to private schools. Very few had left school less than ten years previously. As a group they tend to have more diverse school backgrounds than 'normal' students - e.g. having been educated overseas, interstate or in non-metropolitan schools. In terms of occupation the largest single group of men held semi-professional or managerial positions. The largest group of women had held clerical or secretarial jobs. More than half of the entrants had no formal post-secondary school qualifications.

8.2 Performance

There is little doubt that the performance of entrants under the Early Leavers' Scheme has been of a high standard. In some ways this is hardly surprising since the number of students entering each year, is small and the University is committed to selecting only those applicants who are demonstrably of higher academic ability than the 'normal' entrants they displace. What was seen initially as a gesture on the part of the University to helping 'underprivileged' or 'disadvantaged' individuals may now be viewed as a means of selecting a group of able students making a considerable contribution to the University.

8.3 Withdrawal Rate

Approximately 15 percent of these students either deferred, discontinued or were excluded each year. Interpretation of whether this is high or low rests on an understanding of reasons for withdrawal. The most common reasons given were 'inability to adjust to the University' and 'marital' and other 'family' problems. Some of the withdrawal rate is temporary, some involves transferring to another University. The frequency and severity of these common reasons for withdrawal (and the problems are not confined to those who actually withdraw) suggest that candidates would benefit from advice and even warnings of the problems they are likely to encounter.

8.4 Grounds on Which Entry Sought

The grounds on which entry was sought were most frequently not simple reasons but a mixture of unpropitious family or financial circumstances.

It may be that elaboration of reasons for claiming disadvantage as the basis of selection is unnecessary. Leaving school early is in itself evidence of 'disadvantage'.

8.5 Reasons for Coming to the University

The most commonly cited reasons for attending University were for the sake of the qualifications and for personal satisfaction. Women tended, more than men to want a degree which would allow them to find a more satisfying job.

8.6.1 Special Problems

Course

While the performance of the Early Leavers has been remarkable it is also apparent that as a group they face particular difficulties at the University. A section of the Special Admissions Committee's Report to Professorial Board (No. 6/73) when the Scheme was being worked out, commented -

> The Committee also recognises that special assistance of a remedial nature may be necessary to help disadvantaged students during their first year at University.

In the first year an attempt was made to keep track of the progress of the original intake though this did not constitute 'special assistance'. Since then no attempt has been made to assist later intakes. It is apparent from the results of this study that most suffered from ignorance of what was expected, particularly in the writing of essays, in the preparation of assignments, in subjects requiring some mathematical background and in developing study habits. For many there was a quite ill-founded anxiety about their competence. Several entrants in each year appeared to drop out through failure to adjust to the early demands of the University.

A number of these initial difficulties might well be alleviated by some guidance at the beginning of the year.

8.6.2 Personal Life

A second area in which widespread difficulty was reported both amongst those who persevered and those who 'dropped out' was strain in the private lives of entrants. This was manifested in a number of ways. A number of entrants experienced severe financial difficulties. A high proportion explicitly mentioned strain in their marriages and family life. Others found themselves cut off from their normal social activities. There were a number of cases of illness and tension that if not caused were aggravated by attending University, in juggling the priorities of home, work and study. There was also evidence of feeling cut off from younger students.

It would be in the best interests of Early Leavers to be given a salutary warning of the difficulties that are likely to be faced in coming to the University. This could best be done by drawing on the experience of Early Leavers from previous intakes and on sympathetic academic, counselling and medical staff.

Nearly all entrants interviewed said they would have welcomed some initial assistance or contact with other Early Leavers.

8.7 Method of Selection

The method by which Early Leavers are selected is outlined in the introduction to this report. Some consideration ought to be given to the adequacy of the present method of selection, particularly if it is decided to increase the intake. The aptitude test is really the basis of selection. Applicants who score above a certain cut-off point may be interviewed. An essay is no longer required. It may be that the essay itself was a test of motivation, the essential factor in the success of older students. Certainly there is a small body of evidence that older students perform relatively poorly on admission tests and yet do better at University than 'normal' entrants. (Perkins, 1971; Reed & Murphy, 1975). In similar schemes at the University of N.S.W. and the University of Newcastle and at several tertiary institutions (West et al., 1977) emphasis is placed on applicants demonstrating their motivation for study by overcoming pre-entry hurdles rather than on the basis of an aptitude test score. If consideration is to be given to increasing the numbers entering under the Scheme then distinguishing between applicants on the basis of motivation is likely to be a more critical factor.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Method of Selection

Consideration should be given to the adequacy of the present method of selection. The following modification is suggested: introduction of a selection procedure in which greater emphasis is placed on motivation measured by capacity to overcome several pre-entry hurdles. Components of selection could be -

i) Completed full time schooling at least five years previously

ii) May have attempted but not gained H.S.C.

iii) Submission of an essay (altering the topic each year)

iv) Aptitude test to gauge a minimum level of ability

v) Attendance at a compulsory meeting at which applicants given advice and warning about the difficulties - personal, financial, workwise - in coming to the University

The aptitude test, writing of an essay and compulsory meeting could be conducted on the same day.

9.2 Special Assistance

i) Students who are selected should be invited to an Orientation meeting. The purpose of the meeting would be to inform students of the facilities available to them, particularly courses already offered in the University to help with essays and assignments, remedial maths, use of the library etc. Students should be informed of services available on campus for them such as counselling and medical health services, English adviser, faculty advisers, S.P.A.M., part timers' association, clubs and societies available, child-minding facilities etc. It would be helpful if there were representatives from a number of these groups present so that the Early Leavers would have an informal opportunity of asking questions. The meeting should probably be partly a structured meeting and partly an informal gathering.

ii) Each entrant, at least in his first year, should be assigned to a member of staff in the faculty in which he is enrolled to whom he could turn from time to time for special assistance.

If these guidelines were followed it should be possible to increase gradually the number of students entering under the Scheme in the faculties of Arts, Law and Economics, and at the same time maintain the level of success of the Scheme.

Any serious attempt to make the Scheme available in Science, Engineering and Medicine requires a careful rethinking of what assistance these faculties would be prepared to offer entrants.

References

Challis, R. The experience of mature students. Studies in Higher Education, 1976, 1, 209-222.

Cleugh, M.F. Stresses of mature students. British Journal of Educational Studies, 1972, 20, 76-90.

Perkins, S.A. Success of mature age students in university studies. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 1971, 17, 105-112.

Reed, J.G. & Murphy, T. Academic performance of mature adults and veterans. College and University, 1975, 50, 129-144.

Walker, P. The university performance of mature students. Research in Education, 1975, 14, 1-13.

West, L.H.T., Boon Pak Keong & Smurthwaite, A.M. Mature age students in tertiary education in Australia. Interim Report. H.E.A.R.U. Monash University, June, 1977. (unpublished report)

Yallowley, D. Is it ever too late? Vestes, 1976, 19 (2), 12-15.

MONASH UNIVERSITY

SPECIAL ENTRY SCHEME FOR 1978

(B) SCHEME ("EARLY LEAVERS")

Monash University will admit, in 1978 a limited number of unqualified students who can show definite evidence of educational disadvantage.

The (B) Scheme ("Early Leavers") is intended for applicants who left school before 1973 and who have not gained the normal minimum entry qualifications, that is, who do not have their Higher School Certificate or Matriculation or the equivalent. Persons who are taking HSC this year are ineligible to apply under this Scheme.

Applicants considered to have established a strong case of having been educationally disadvantaged will be invited to sit for a test of general reasoning ability which, for all Faculties other than Arts, will include a test of mathematical reasoning ability. The test will be held on the morning of Saturday, 29 October 1977. Up to 4 per cent of the first year quota in each Faculty may be admitted under this Scheme, at the discretion of the Faculty Selection Committee and in accordance with the University Statutes and Regulations.

The University may give a positive weight to the test scores of candidates whose applications give evidence of extreme cultural or linguistic disadvantage which, in its opinion, could result in their performing at a level in the test which does not reflect their true abilities.

In general, the University will not expect to receive applications from persons who could normally be expected to have undertaken mature-age or part-time HSC study.

Persons who have applied previously under this Scheme may re-apply if they wish.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The main grounds for consideration of educational disadvantage are:

(i) disrupted or shortened secondary education for family or financial reasons or for reasons of persistent or recurring ill health, etc.

(ii) mother tongue not being English

(iii) aboriginal or part aboriginal descent

(iv) school deficiencies - staff/equipment shortages, etc.

(v) two or more subjects taken by correspondence

Applicants may present other factors, but they are unlikely to be successful unless at least one of the above grounds can be substantiated.

PROCEDURE

The Special Admissions Committee will consider all applications and will grade them by degree of disadvantage. Those considered to have established a strong case will be invited to take a test which will be held on the morning of Saturday, 29 October 1977. It will be of approximately two hours' duration. Final details will be advised in a letter (posted on or before 7 October 1977) inviting selected applicants to sit the test. Those applicants considered to be ineligible for the Scheme will be advised at this time. The test will be on reasoning ability; no prior preparation or study is required. This test is conducted independently by the Australian Council for Educational Research and is aimed at providing both the applicant and the University with an indication of whether the applicant possesses the requisite intellectual ability to succeed at study at the University level. There will be a fee of $4.00 to cover the cost of the test.

The results of those applicants selected by the Committee after the test, together with their application forms, will be sent to the relevant Faculty Selection Committee, which will decide upon the offers to be made. Applicants will be notified by mail from mid to late November 1977 whether or not they are among this group. It is possible that some Selection Committees may wish to interview applicants. Whether or not applicants are interviewed, it may be early February 1978 before they are informed of the final decision on their application.

The applicant's signature on the application form should be witnessed by some responsible person who knows the applicant. The witness should sign the form and state his address and occupation.

Completed application forms must be received by Friday, 9 September 1977. Late applications cannot be accepted. All enquiries must be made in writing as it is impracticable for the University to handle telephone enquiries.

NOTE ON COURSES

Applicants may apply for entry to any one of the six Faculties at Monash University which take undergraduate students, namely: Arts, Economics and Politics, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Science. Education is not available, as this Faculty only admits students at the postgraduate level.

Note, however, that the Faculty of Science states:

> "The discipline of Science cannot be wholly assimilated in the time of a course of study at the university. Students, to have a reasonable chance of success, must have had some years of preparation in the basic facts and logic of, especially, chemistry, mathematics, and physics. The Selection Committee, in considering the application of an early leaver would look for such experience, for evidence of native ability and, if need be, for evidence of appropriate post-secondary educational experience, along with the results of the test."

Since three of the four compulsory first year subjects in the Faculty of Engineering are taught by the Faculty of Science, and the fourth requires mathematical ability, the same remarks may be taken to apply equally to Engineering.

Similarly, the Faculty of Medicine states that it would look for demonstrated reasoning ability and a knowledge of essential subject matter.

Students in the Faculties of Arts, Economics and Politics, and Law may study part-time if they wish; it should be noted, however, that no evening lectures are held by these Faculties.

For a summary of the courses available in tertiary institutions in Victoria, applicants are referred to the Guide for Prospective 1978 Students issued by the Victorian Universities Admissions Committee. A free copy of the Guide may be obtained by writing to the Secretary, VUAC, 11 Queens Road, Melbourne, 3004, enclosing a self-addressed envelope (10" x 8") bearing a 60 cent stamp.

J.D. Butchart,
ACADEMIC REGISTRAR.

MDW:BM

MONASH UNIVERSITY

EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME (B SCHEME)

APPLICATION FORM (1978 ENTRY)

To be completed by applicants who left school before 1973 and who have not satisfied the minimum university entrance requirements.

(Please print clearly)

1. Miss / Mrs. / Ms. / Mr. SURNAME ..... OTHER NAMES .....

2. ADDRESS *(for correspondence between September 1977 and March 1978)*

..... POSTCODE .....

3. TELEPHONE *(Daytime)* ..... 4. AGE *(at 1 January 1978)* .....

5. DATE OF BIRTH

Day	Mth	Yr

6. APPLICANTS BORN OVERSEAS

(a) Nationality - Former ..... Present .....

(b) Date of arrival in Australia .....

If not now Australian - (c) Country of permanent home residence .....

(d) Type of Visa .....

7. FACULTY PREFERRED *(tick the one you wish to enter - no more than one faculty may be applied for)*

Arts ☐ Econ.& Pol. ☐ Engin. ☐ Law ☐ Med. ☐ Sci. ☐

8. DO YOU PROPOSE TO STUDY FULL TIME OR PART TIME? .....

9. NUMBER OF YEARS IN SECONDARY/TECHNICAL SCHOOL *(Add stage at which left, e.g. mid-Form IV)*

(i) Overseas (yrs) ..... Stage .....

(ii) In Australia (yrs) ..... Stage .....

10. YEAR LEFT SCHOOL

(i) Overseas .....

(ii) In Australia .....

11. NAME AND PLACE OF SCHOOL *(in Australia)* .....

..... POSTCODE .....

12. LIST ANY H.S.C./MATRICULATION SUBJECTS ATTEMPTED

Year	Subject	Result	Year	Subject	Result

13. FURTHER EDUCATION DETAILS - Give details and dates of all subjects, studies and examinations results *(e.g. Leaving Certificate, Technical College, Correspondence Course, etc. Attach photocopy of transcript of academic record).*

14. HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR NAME? FORMER NAME ..... UNTIL ..... *(Year)*

(Note - replies to 15 and 16 do not affect your chances at Monash in any way)

15. (a) ARE YOU APPLYING THIS YEAR TO LA TROBE UNIVERSITY EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME?

☐ YES ☐ NO

(b) IF SO, WHICH DEGREE COURSE? *(e.g. Arts, Economics, etc.)* .....

16. (a) HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR THE MONASH UNIVERSITY EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME PREVIOUSLY?

☐ YES ☐ NO

(b) IF SO, WHICH YEAR AND COURSE? *(e.g. 1975 Law etc.)* .....

17. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

(a) Present Occupation .....

Name of Employer .....

Address of Employer .....

(b) Give a brief outline of your employment or other activities since leaving school

18. STATEMENT BY APPLICANT OF DISADVANTAGE *(Tick any of the following grounds which are relevant to your case and then explain how they and any other factors affected your educational progress. Be sure to include an explanation of the disadvantages at home or school or elsewhere which prevented you finishing your secondary schooling or which prevented you from achieving your full potential).*

(a) Disrupted or shortened secondary education for family or financial reasons or for reasons of persistent or recurrent illness etc. ☐

(b) Mother tongue not being English ☐

(c) Aboriginal descent ☐

(d) Inadequate school provision ☐

(e) 2 or more correspondence subjects *(state subjects taken* ..... ☐
.....*)*

(f) Other(s) ☐

EXPLANATION *(Use separate sheet if necessary)*

19. REASONS FOR CURRENT STUDY INTENTIONS *(Why did you decide to apply to enter University by this Scheme rather than by doing part-time or mature-age HSC studies? Use separate sheet if necessary).*

DECLARATION

I ..... do solemnly and sincerely declare that to the best of my knowledge the information supplied herein is correct and complete. I acknowledge that the provision of incorrect information or the withholding of relevant information relating to my academic record may result in the withdrawal by the University of any place which may be offered and that this withdrawal may take place at any stage during the tertiary course.

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

WITNESS ..... ADDRESS .....

.....

OCCUPATION .....

Note: This form must reach the Academic Registrar, Monash University, Clayton, 3168, by Friday, 9 September 1977. Late applications cannot be accepted.

Appendix B i) (1974 Entrants)

HIGHER EDUCATION ADVISORY AND RESEARCH UNIT

EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME

NAME: _____

1. How have you found your second and third years at Monash? (More enjoyable/less enjoyable than first year - in what ways?)

2. a) Have you altered your course since first year - e.g. changed faculty / doing a double degree / doing an honours course?

   b) What subjects are you taking this year?

3. Why did you want to come to University originally? Do you still feel that way?

4. Has the University lived up to your expectations?

5. a) At what level did you finish secondary school?

   b) Did you gain any qualifications on leaving school? What were they?

6. Do you receive an allowance under T.E.A.S.? N.E.A.T.?

7. Have you had any financial difficulties while at University?

8. Has attending University created any particular problems in your life?

9. Have you experienced any ill health while at Monash?

10. Have your University studies been a source of tension? Can you specify in what ways?

11. Has your attitude to your studies or the University changed since your first year? Can you specify in what ways?

12. Have you had difficulty in any particular subjects or areas of your studies?

13. Are there any special problems in being an 'early leaver' or 'mature age' student?

14. a) Have you had a job while attending University this year?

    b) Is it P/T or F/T? (If P/T) How many hours per week do you spend on it?

15. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend in private study? (Not including class hours).

16. What do you plan to do when you graduate from Monash?

17. Do you think there is any special help that should be given to 'early leavers'?

18. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Appendix B ii) (1975 Entrants)

HIGHER EDUCATION ADVISORY AND RESEARCH UNIT

EARLY LEAVERS SCHEME

NAME: _____

1. a) What was your first experience of Monash like?

   b) How did you find your second year?

2. a) Did you alter your course during first year?

   In what ways?

   b) Did you alter your course during second year?

   In what ways?

   c) Do you intend taking an honours course or altering the faculty in which you are enrolled?

3. On what grounds did you apply for entrance to Monash under the Early Leavers' Scheme?

4. Why did you want to come to the University?

5. Has the University lived up to your expectations?

6. a) At what level did you finish secondary school?

   b) Did you gain any qualifications after leaving school?

7. What was your occupation prior to coming to University?

8. Do you receive an allowance under -

   i) T.E.A.S.
   ii) N.E.A.T.

9. Have you had financial difficulties while at University? Can you give some details?

10. Has attending University created any particular problems in your life? Can you give some details?

11. Have you experienced any ill health while at Monash? Can you give some details?

12. Have your University studies been a source of tension? Can you specify in what way?

13. Have you had difficulty with any particular subjects or areas of your studies? Please give details.

14. Are there any special problems in being an Early Leaver or Mature Age student at Monash?

15. (If part time student)
    a) Did you have a job while attending University?
       i) in your first year?
          What was it?
       ii) in your second year?
          What was it?

    b) How many hours per week did you spend on it?
       i) in first year?
       ii) in second year?

16. Approximately how many hours per week did you spend in private study?

    i) last year

    ii) this year

17. a) (If you havd deferred your studies?) When did you defer?

    b) Why did you defer?

    c) Do you intend resuming your studies?

    If so when?

    d) Did you seek advice about deferring?

    From whom?

18. Have you received encouragement from members of staff?

    a) Those teaching you

    b) Others

19. What do you plan to do when you graduate from Monash?

20. Do you think there is any special help that should be given to Early Leavers? Please give details.

21. Any other comments?